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EUR FOR DICARLO, EUR/SCE FOR HOH, FOOKS AND STINCHCOMB, NSC
FOR BRAUN, OSD FOR FLORY

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PTER](#) [BK](#)

SUBJECT: BOSNIA: NEW PARLIAMENTARY SPEAKERS PLEDGE SUPPORT
FOR CITIZENSHIP REVIEW COMMISSION

REF: A. SARAJEVO 0063

[TB](#). 06 SARAJEVO 2072

[TC](#). 06 SARAJEVO 1748

Classified By: DCM JUDITH B. CEFKIN, REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D).

[11.](#) (C) DCM, along with Political and Economic section representatives, met January 25 with new co-speakers of the BiH House of Representatives Niko Lozancic (HDZ-BiH) and Milorad Zivkovic (SNSD) to discuss legislative priorities in the months ahead; a key focus of the discussion was the need for an extension of the mandate of the Citizenship Review Commission (CRC). Both agreed the CRC's work was of great importance, and its mandate should be extended as soon as possible. (Note: The third co-speaker, Beriz Belkic (SBiH) did not attend the meeting due to illness. End Note.) DCM told the speakers the CRC's mandate must be extended prior to February 16 or it would not be able to complete the review of the approximately 400 remaining cases. The speakers noted they were not aware time was so short, with Zivkovic bemoaning the fact that there is no administrative clause in the CRC law that would have allowed an extension without action from parliament. Nonetheless, Zivkovic and Lozancic both agreed they would explore the possibility of extending the CRC's mandate without requiring action by the House of Peoples, which has not yet been convened. (Comment: Party struggles over the allocation of seats in the Federation House of Peoples have delayed the formation of the BiH House of Peoples, an issue that is unlikely to be resolved in the immediate term. End Comment.)

[12.](#) (S) On a separate issue regarding the CRC, Pol Counselor Michael Murphy told the speakers we hoped parliament would pass an amendment to Article X of the Law on Citizenship to ensure individuals stripped of their Bosnian citizenship would be barred from reapplying at a later date. Currently, the law contains a provision that allows for immediate reapplication. In the previous session of parliament, the amendment seeking to close this loophole was revised by the Council of Ministers to allow reapplication after five years, a move that may have been politically motivated, as the issue became a cause celebre of nationalist Bosniaks during the election campaign. After efforts to remove the five year language from the draft proved unsuccessful, proponents of the permanent ban on reapplication chose to pull the flawed draft from consideration by the parliament so it could be reintroduced after the election.

[13.](#) (S) Both speakers said they would support the removal of the five year language. On tactics, Zivkovic noted it may be

safest to handle the removal of the objectionable language at the committee level in parliament, rather than pass it back for reintroduction by the Council of Ministers (CoM). That way, members of the CoM, especially Minister for Human Rights-designate Safet Halilovic (SBiH) could not attempt to block the removal of the five year language. Lozancic appeared to agree with this approach.

¶4. (S) COMMENT: The absence of Bosniak co-speaker Belkic, though unplanned, likely lead to a more open and frank discussion with the other speakers, who differ from Belkic on many key issues, perhaps including the amendment to the CRC law. The assurances of support for this key policy goal from the other speakers should prove helpful to bringing Belkic on board when the time comes to resubmit the law for parliamentary approval. END COMMENT.

MCELHANEY